

# What, Who, How, & Why

## Make your story Immediate

This worksheet was created to help you focus on the experience of your protagonist and your reader in the opening chapter of your story. By completing this worksheet before drafting your opening, you can ensure that your story begins with an exciting and emotional start. Be detailed in your responses to the prompts and feel free to approach them in any order that feels natural to you. An answer in one section may inspire ideas for other sections. Share your answers and get feedback from your fellow writers to make your first chapter as immediate as possible!

### WHAT:

*These questions are designed to help you think about the events of your opening chapter and how they relate to the rest of your story. Readers expect that your first chapter is representative of the plot and tone of your story going forward.*

What is your story about? How does it relate to your protagonist's goal?

What events happen in the first chapter that show the reader what your story is about?

What will readers find exciting or emotional about your first chapter?

## WHO:

*These questions are designed to help put your protagonist at the center of your hook. Like the events in the first chapter of your story, these answers should be rooted in your protagonist's present and describe what is happening to them now (frontstory, rather than backstory). You should not include flashbacks or POV switches.*

Who is your story about?

Why is this day in your protagonist's life different from every other day? Can you pinpoint the moment in the first chapter when their entire life changes?

How are you introducing conflict? Is it an external or internal conflict? How are the events and consequences of your first chapter felt immediately in the second chapter and beyond?

## HOW:

*These questions are designed to help you better understand the emotional state of your protagonist before, during, and after they face a massive change to their situation in the first chapter. Examine the protagonist's thoughts, feelings, and motivations to discover how the events of the first chapter will impact their life.*

How do your protagonist's emotions change from the start of the chapter to the end? How are these emotions different from their baseline, day-to-day feelings?

How do their emotions appear in their thoughts and actions in the first chapter?

How does your protagonist's motivation dictate their feelings towards the story journey they are about to embark on?

### WHY:

*These questions are designed to get you to think about why your reader will connect with your story and your protagonist. Remember, your goal is to get readers to respond emotionally to your protagonist, so give your protagonist relatable or interesting emotional reactions to specific events.*

Why do the events of the first chapter matter to the protagonist? What are the stakes? What happens if they fail?

Why should the reader care about your protagonist after chapter one? Why will they keep reading your story?

Why do you think this is the best opening for your story? Why do the events of the first chapter matter? How do the events of the first chapter relate to the rest of the story?